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Reserve

Extension Work in Land Tenure 1/

Any review of tenure problems on the farms of America cannot overlook the fact that approximately 68 percent of the farms are operated by owner-operators and 32 percent by tenants. Also that 20 to 25 percent of the agricultural population is made up of hired workers and their families.

Within each of these broad categories there are, of course, a number of groups with farm management, and other economic and social problems peculiar to their own conditions as well as with conditions that are common to all groups. To be most effective our educational programs must be sufficiently flexible and practical to help each and all groups best meet their particular problems and groups of problems.

This conference sponsored by the Farm Foundation is an exploratory type of approach to the improvement of our educational activities in the field of land tenure. If this conference is as fruitful as we feel that it can be, we would hope that conferences on an area or regional basis will follow. These conferences might very well be closely related to the work of regional farm tenure research committees.

Let us begin with looking at those over-all activities in farm management extension that benefit owner-operators, operating tenants, croppers, and landlords. We feel that activities such as agricultural planning, the dissemination of outlook and economic information, the keeping and analysis of farm accounts and farm and home planning all contribute to land tenure improvement. Likewise the thousands of farm management meetings dealing with principles and factors contributing to a better understanding of why some farms pay better than others also contribute to and are important in land tenure improvement. Marketing information which reached over 4,000,000 farm families this past year also gives important aid to these tenure groups.

Landlord-Tenant Relations

Getting down now to the more specific problems and types of educational activities in the land tenure field, one of the most outstanding is work on landlord-tenant relations. This is probably the oldest and most time-consuming activity of extension workers in the field of land tenure. Demand for assistance in this field has constantly increased particularly for information on lease agreements (which include father-son relations and general leasing arrangements) and problems of soil and water conservation.

Extension economists have made use of case studies of successful renting arrangements in their educational work to improve landlord-tenant relations. Through personal interviews with landlords and tenants who have had successful experiences the extension economists assemble pertinent facts relating to the

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particular leasing arrangements. The facts obtained and generalizations which can be drawn from them as well as from research findings are used in state-wide educational programs. This information is disseminated through meetings, personal contacts, newspaper and radio publicity, extension circulars and other means open to extension workers.

In some States the extension economist has attacked the tenancy problems through county farm tenancy committees. These committees have commonly been made up of leading farmers in the county including landlords, tenants, and owner-operators. These committees have worked with county extension workers in advising with farmers, and with others interested, on renting arrangements best suited to the needs of the county and on a particular farm situation. In some States the county tenancy committees have assisted in locating and appropriately recognizing outstanding cases of successful landlord-tenant relationships. They have served as the organized group through which extension workers have held landlord-tenant conferences; and they have studied the local tenancy situation and recommended steps needed to improve basic conditions of land use and tenancy.

Landlord-tenant conferences are usually held by landlords and tenants meeting separately to discuss problems and their solutions common to each group. In many instances these are followed by joint conferences of both landlords and tenants for the purpose of considering problems of mutual interest.

Many land-grant colleges as well as the Federal Extension Service in cooperation with BAE and other agencies have prepared and made available to farm people standard lease forms which can be used by landlords and tenants in developing satisfactory lease agreements. In most cases these standard lease forms provide a certain amount of flexibility so the two parties can adjust the provisions to suit the needs of a particular situation. In a number of States the extension economists with or without the cooperation of the research people, have worked with leading farmers to get their reaction to the basic needs of a good farm lease for the area.

Father-son business agreements are considered in joint father-son meetings, in personal contacts on farms, and in other ways. Important factors such as the importance of size of business, housing, contributions by each party, equitable division of proceeds, management responsibilities, and the interests of other members of the family are discussed. Other meetings with fathers only attending have proved worth while. In a few States father-son business arrangements are considered in young people's groups.

The problems of appraising the contributions of landlords and tenants insofar as equitable lease agreements are concerned were pointed up in a recent bulletin published July 1946, entitled "Improving Farm and Ranch Tenure in the Northern Plains," prepared by the tenure committee, Northern Great Plains Advisory Council. Other publications have touched on this same point. With a great deal more knowledge on labor efficiency and work unit standards, a more accurate measurement by both landlord and tenant of the tenant's and landlord's capabilities and contribution and the adequacy of the farm plant can be made in determining the equitability of leasing arrangements. The use of these measurements as well as others can make for better farming and more harmonious relations between landlord and tenant. To accomplish this, additional research may be needed to supplement information now available. In thinking of landlord-tenant relations consideration must be given to the personality or psychological



factors as well as to the more strictly economic aspects of these relations.

It is often easier for county extension workers to contact tenants than landlords. From one-third to one-half of the landlords live outside the immediate vicinity of their land holdings and for the most part in the larger towns or cities. Some States have reached these landlords by holding meetings for them in larger cities often in cooperation with business men's groups. If landlords are to be assisted in understanding the farm management as well as the personal or psychological aspects of successful farm operation, ways and means must be found for reaching them.

Problems of incorporating soil and water conservation practices in rental agreements are worthy of further exploration. The farm management aspects of soil and water conservation are lagging far behind the engineering phases. We need to know a great deal more about the effects of soil and water conservation programs upon organization, labor requirements and income to meet costs of operation. The economics of how fast and how far to go as well as how costs and returns should be shared, need further study and the results made available to farm people.

By tapping our great wealth of farm management data that is applicable to the solution of many problems arising between landlord and tenant, we can supply much of the specific information now needed. This group might well consider how information such as the importance of size of business, labor efficiency and crop and livestock balance, can be included in our educational work in land tenure. Proper consideration and attention to sound farm management principles by landlords and tenants is an important key to satisfactory landlord-tenant relations.

#### Property Transfers

Extension economists have been and are interested in the field of property transfer agreements, and have carried on some educational programs in this field. Their programs have included, among other things, wills, purchase contracts, inheritance, life estates, and joint tenancy. A great deal of the required information necessary to carry on such a program is available in one form or another. To do a bigger job, extension workers need much of the present information reworked to fit their needs. Also we will need to think through a procedure for getting information into the hands of greater numbers of interested people. For the most part, a successful program must meet the needs of those who are personally interested and have particular problems in need of solution at the moment.

Land appraisal schools or demonstrations have been conducted in many States. These meetings have been held in cooperation with the Farm Credit Administration and other agencies. Federal Land Bank appraisers from district offices have assisted in holding these schools. These meetings have been held primarily for leaders as one means of combating inflation in land values. They have also been held for county committees in connection with providing guidance to veterans and others in getting started in farming.

#### Employer-Employee Relationships

A tight farm labor supply during recent years has resulted in a great deal



of activity in the preparation and dissemination of information on employer-employee relations in some States. The importance of such items as housing, perquisites and profit sharing or bonuses in retaining year-round help has been disseminated widely in several of the States. Suggested ways of increasing the hired worker's income and security and at the same time promoting his interest in the success of the business have been made available and highly publicized. In several instances this publicity was followed up with surveys to obtain examples of procedures farmers used to hold their year-round help and provide a means of sharing increased farm profits.

### Public Lands

We must at least note in passing, the existence of special problems in areas where public ownership and management of land is important and where tenure is necessarily some combination of public and private use rights. There are many of these areas, particularly in the Far West. In these areas, nonagricultural uses are frequently more important than agricultural uses. Often the two are intermingled geographically. Consequently the problems are quite intricate. Some excellent research work has been done by the RAE and individual States but our basic knowledge of these problems is quite inadequate. In most Western States some educational work has been done. This is usually informational in character, but where a planning approach has been used it has gone further into problems and ways of improving use arrangements. Since this whole sector of tenure is a special field in itself it might be that in this conference we can do little more than flag its importance and indicate the need for further exploration.

### Extension Methods in Farm Tenure

The program carried by most States in setting up county committees to render assistance to veterans and others who desire to locate on farms, cuts across most phases of the work in land tenure. These committees were set up in most States during 1945 and have functioned with varying degrees of success since. Many States held training schools for these committees while others provided information through correspondence and the preparation of publications. As an example of the services rendered by many of these committees, in one county, which is typical of many others, the committee received so many requests for assistance that a part-time assistant was employed to help veterans and others in solving their problems. How these or similar committees might function in solving specific problems in the broad field of land tenure is a question worth pondering.

With many States having only one economist who is supposed to do everything from farm management to leading discussions in the field of public policy, there is a serious need for our spelling out rather completely a procedure for successfully conducting the many phases of work in land tenure. Can the program be conducted best through county meetings, conferences, forums, discussion groups, film strips, newspaper or radio publicity or other methods? The educational program for each phase of land tenure requires a different approach or a different viewpoint of the same approach.

During the next two days we should review some of the successful methods and procedures for getting the job done. We should get down on paper in understandable language the how, what, when, where, who, and why of the important problems in land tenure education. Selections and adaptations can then be made



by the States to fit their particular situations. Many State workers when embarking on new programs are appreciative of an opportunity to review the experience of other State workers for ideas on good ways to proceed.

### Looking to the Future

In looking ahead to the next five to ten years' work in land tenure education, we might give consideration to:

#### A. Phases of work and relationships.

1. A reappraisal of the job to be done in the field of land tenure including, among other things, the listing of important fields of activity. What aspects of these fields can be handled in connection with other activities such as farm and home planning, farm management projects, and work in general economics as separate from phases that need special attention?
2. The regional aspects of land tenure problems and indicate the need for a regional approach to research and extension work. Extension workers, however, will need to think through methods and techniques for doing the jobs that need to be done on a regional basis.
3. The working relationship between research and extension teaching so as to better serve the needs of farm people.
4. Broader problems common to large areas such as those of the Northern Great Plains.
5. Bringing to the attention of research people <sup>the</sup> needs for specific information. Also working closely enough with them to be fully informed on research work and its progress, and advise with them regarding the preparation and use of their findings.

#### B. Extension methods and procedures

1. More effective means of getting the results of research out to the people who want and will use them.
2. Various methods of disseminating land tenure information such as tours, schools, conferences, seminars, forums, film shorts, movies, and playlets.
3. More effective methods of working with landlords and tenants on relationship problems.
4. Preparation of lease forms to be sold at stationery stores, real estate offices, banks, etc.
5. On-the-job training of veterans and its relation to land tenure improvement.
6. Educational programs with hired workers and young farmers and their families, and older youth.



7. The importance of training in elementary and high schools in farm planning, farm accounting systems, and leasing arrangements.

8. Expanding the use of land-appraisal schools or demonstrations, in cooperation with other agencies, as a positive approach to educational work on land inflation and the hazards that accompany the purchase of land at inflated prices.

9. Expanding the educational work in property transfer and transfer agreements.

10. Exploring the possibilities of disseminating among farm people more information regarding State laws dealing with land tenure. Such an activity could also provide background for desirable tenure legislation. The BAE, in cooperation with State workers, has prepared statements for 12 States on legal aspects of land tenure dealing with laws of the respective States.